



Executive Correspondence Guidelines

from the Office of the Governor

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Introduction

It is Governor Christine O. Gregoire's goal to respond to every constituent quickly and accurately, with particular attention paid to addressing specific questions and concerns that are raised. The role of the Governor's Constituent Services unit is to help expedite this process through appropriate and timely referrals and responses.

The Governor receives inquiries regarding all the business of the state (and sometimes other levels of government as well), and requires the help of agencies to respond to constituents who have questions about agencies' policies and procedures.

Executive (VIP) Referrals: Agencies are given **one (1) week** to respond to executive correspondence referrals unless otherwise indicated. ****IF YOU NEED AN EXTENSION ON THIS TIME FRAME, PLEASE CONTACT THE EXECUTIVE CORRESPONDENCE ANALYST or the CONSTITUENT SERVICES MANAGER.** Unless directed by the referral sheet or the Executive Correspondence Analyst to prepare a response for the Governor's signature, agencies may respond in written form, via a telephone call, or through personal contact with the constituent.

General Constituents: Agencies are given **two (2) weeks** to respond to general correspondence referrals unless otherwise indicated. ****IF YOU NEED AN EXTENSION ON THIS TIME FRAME, PLEASE CONTACT THE CORRESPONDENCE ANALYST or the CONSTITUENT SERVICES MANAGER.** Unless directed by the referral sheet or the Correspondence Analyst to prepare a response for the Governor's signature, agencies may respond in written form, via a telephone call, or through personal contact with the constituent.

In an effort to meet Governor Gregoire's correspondence objectives with increased speed and accuracy, Constituent Services recently made several substantive changes in its processes. We believe that our new and improved policies, which are outlined in this document, will help us to better serve the Governor's constituency - the people of the state of Washington. We ask that you carefully read the attached guidelines to ensure that you understand the procedures, and that you follow them closely in dealing with constituent contacts.

The information regarding the letter format, memo format, address/salutation format, and correspondence preferences are to be used by all staff who are responding to correspondence referred from Governor Gregoire's constituent services staff.

The remaining information is directed towards agency contact staff who work with constituent services staff, and how referrals should be processed.

If you see a way that our processes can be improved, please let us know. We welcome your ideas and suggestions.

A Casework Referral from the Governor's Office

This is a constituent contact that usually has been received by phone in the Governor's Office, although the request for assistance may have been received in a letter, from an e-mail, from a legislative hotline call, at a public forum, or from a visitor to the Governor's Office. These requests are responded to by the Governor's Constituent Relations Representatives. Because these requests often are time-sensitive, they usually are handled via telephone, rather than written communication.

After talking with the constituent, the Constituent Relations Representative decides whether it will be most appropriate for an agency or the Governor's Office to respond. Even when a Constituent Relations Representative takes the lead in handling the case, the Representative may request information from an agency. The agency is expected to return the initial call within 24 hours.

If the Representative asks the agency to respond directly to the constituent, the initial contact should be made within 24 hours, with a follow-up call or a copy of a written response to the Representative.

Governor Gregoire meets many people during her travels throughout the state, and they are assured that this office will be responsive to their requests for assistance. Constituent Relations Representatives in the Governor's Office serve both as representatives of the Governor and also as ombudsmen to constituents who often contact the Governor as their last resort for help in addressing their individual concerns.

The Constituent Relations Representative must, by definition, act as an advocate for the constituent to resolve the problem. This involves asking questions about the case to determine whether there is anything that can be done to resolve the situation. After the Constituent Relations Representative has confirmed that everything already has been done that is possible, he/she must tell the constituent that every possibility has been explored and there are no further avenues open. In other cases, the Constituent Relations Representative may be able to offer suggestions the constituent can follow up on.

Occasionally, a Constituent Relations Representative will request a letter from an agency director or staff, or for the Governor's signature when a constituent needs an answer in writing to bring closure to a case. Just as some correspondence may be answered with a phone call, some phone calls may need to be answered with a letter.

The process that each agency uses to handle these inquiries may vary from agency to agency. We do ask that you keep us informed about who in your agency is the contact for our Constituent Relations Representatives. The contact should be a key agency person who can be relied on to assist us in getting the information we need from the appropriate unit or staff member.

Receiving a Correspondence Referral from the Governor's Office

Each "executive correspondence" referral will be delivered via email in pdf format and will include:

- A scanned copy of the referral sheet
- A scanned copy of the original correspondence

Each "general correspondence" referral will also be delivered via email in pdf format and will include:

- A scanned copy of the referral sheet
- A scanned copy of the original correspondence, email or notes from a phone call or personal contact received from the constituent;

Overview of the Referral Sheet

Referred to:

This line will identify the staff person or agency responsible for determining the appropriate response to the constituent. For correspondence that does not require a response, "File Only" will appear; in these cases, the correspondence is intended only for your information.

Action Requested: Designates the type of response (see below). If an agency believes an action different than the one designated is necessary, please contact the Correspondence Analyst who made the referral.

- **For Governor's Signature** - The referral agency or staff person must prepare a written response for the Governor's signature. (Also see guidelines below for "Executive Correspondence.")
- **Agency Director/Secretary Signature** - The referral agency should prepare a written response to be signed by the agency's director (no staff signature).
- **Respond as You Deem Appropriate** - You have the freedom to choose the response that will be most effective to get an accurate and timely reply to the constituent: a written response, phone call or personal meeting. If responding by letter, you may determine if the Governor's signature, agency director's signature or staff member's signature is most appropriate.
- **Draft Language** - Please draft language for Governor's Constituent Services to include in a letter from the Governor (usually for correspondence that covers multiple topics). The Constituent Services Writer assigned that subject area will prepare the final letter based on the draft language.
- **Provide Information Requested** - Send information to the constituent as requested.
- **FYI only, no response required** - Material is being sent for your information only. There is no need to respond to the constituent.

Cc's:

Indicates other individuals/agencies who have received copies of this referral for informational purposes only. Those receiving copies are **not required to respond to the constituent contact**. Also, those receiving copies should contact the "referred to" individual or agency **immediately** if you have information you believe should be included or considered as part of the response.

Comments:

A short summary of the subject matter or special directions.

Referral Date and Due Back Date:

Every constituent contact is tracked in the Constituent Response Tracking (CRT) system. Responses to executive correspondence prepared for Governor's signature will have a one week due date from the referral date. Responses to general

correspondence prepared for constituent services signature will have a two week due date from the referral date. A late correspondence report is generated by the system at least monthly, and the agency contact will be notified of any overdue referrals that have not been resolved. Timely responses to correspondence are a priority for Governor Gregoire.

Return to:

This is the name of the Correspondence Analyst who made the referral. Copies of the final agency response, along with a copy of the referral sheet, should be emailed or a copy delivered via campus mail to the Executive Correspondence Analyst (executive correspondence) or to Constituent Services (general correspondence).

Contact Information:

- From - The name, address and/or telephone number of the constituent.
- Contact Date - The date the Governor's Office received the constituent contact.
- Contact Type - Will indicate whether the constituent contacted the Governor's Office via: mail (regular or certified), e-mail, fax, Legislative Hotline, petition, telephone call, walk-in to the Governor's Office, card campaign, or the Governor's Spokane or Vancouver regional offices.

Batch and Log numbers:

All constituent contacts received by the Governor's Office are entered into the CRT system and receive a "log number." The six-digit log number appears in **both the bottom right and top left corners** of the referral cover sheet.

If the Governor receives several constituent contacts on the same topic, we may "batch" several logs together in the database for ease in tracking and responding. If the constituent contact is part of a batch, the six-digit "batch number" will appear in the **bottom left corner** of the referral cover sheet.

Responding to a Referral

Salutations

Governor Gregoire prefers the use of a first-name salutation in response to most general correspondence. Please use a first-name salutation unless the letter writer refers to himself/herself otherwise. Tone and content of the letter also can provide guidance that the writer would prefer to be addressed formally.

For executive correspondence, the Governor prefers the use of a formal salutation (i.e., Dear Mayor).

Style, Format and Quality of Correspondence

Each agency has style manuals, either standard published works or internal documents, which give direction concerning word usage and form of address. The Governor's Office references the Gregg Reference Manual for most style and format questions. Our main concern is accuracy in the content of the letter. Please use spell check. We recommend that any response prepared for the Governor's signature be reviewed by the agency's director or his or her designee.

When preparing correspondence for the Governor's signature, please use the following guidelines (see "Constituent Services Letter Format"):

- Left justify
- Times New Roman font, 12 point
- 1" margins on the left and right, unless the letter is short, at which time it should be increased to 1.25"
- "Overhanging" words (the ones that stick out and don't make the paragraph look uniform) should be dropped to the next line
- The Governor's name should appear in both upper and lower case (Christine O. Gregoire), NOT all caps, and her title (Governor, NOT Governor of the State of Washington) should appear on the line below
- When including a phone or fax number, do not use parentheses to separate the area code from the phone or fax number. Example: 360-123-4567

In addition, each letter for the Governor's signature should include:

- The letter should be dated five days from the day you send the letter to the Governor's Office or the Executive Policy Office
- The recipient's correct name, address, and salutation
- If multiple recipients, provide your letter in merge format with database containing names, addresses and other fields in your letter. (*See section entitled Form Letters with Multiple Addresses*)

Beginning a Response Letter

When responding directly to a constituent, please make it clear that you are responding at the request of the Governor's Office. For example: "I have been asked to respond to your (letter/phone call) to Governor Gregoire regarding"

Occasionally, we will refer a letter that has been forwarded to us from a congressional office. In those cases, the congressional office has notified the constituent that the letter has been sent to the Governor. Therefore, you need to reference both the member of Congress and the Governor in your response letter. For example: "Governor Gregoire has asked our agency to respond to the letter you sent to (name of U.S. Senator or Representative) regarding"

Duplicate Letters

Personal computers have made it easy for correspondents to personalize the same letter to many people. In addition, many constituents commonly fax and mail the same letter to the Governor. We make every effort to identify these "duplicates" and avoid creating separate logs for them, but we occasionally miss a few.

- If you receive a referral from the Governor's Office that is a duplicate of a letter that also was addressed to your agency, call the person in the Governor's Office who referred the letter to discuss the best way to avoid duplicating efforts.
- If you receive two referrals of the same letter addressed to the Governor (i.e., a faxed version and a mailed version), please call the person who referred the log to arrange to have one of the logs deleted.

Multiple-issue Letters

Many constituents who write to the Governor address more than one issue, relating to different agencies of state government. Your agency may receive a referral asking you to respond to a highlighted section of a letter. Clearly indicate in your letter that you are responding only to the issue that is specific to your agency.

Also, as previously mentioned, we may ask for "draft language" to be included in a letter written by the Governor's Correspondence Writers. Within four days of receipt, please send suggested language via e-mail concerning the issue we have asked you to address.

Dating Letters

Letters for the Governor's signature should be dated five working days from the day agencies send them to the Executive Correspondence Analyst. This allows time for our review process. When the Governor is going to be out of the office for any length of time, we may need to change the date so constituents do not receive letters that are dated on days the Governor was publicly not available to sign them. By having the letter in electronic form, we can easily make any necessary edits.

Enclosures, cc's, and bcc's

Please include all pertinent enclosures. Limit the number of cc's to those absolutely necessary. Other than executive staff, personnel within your own agency should be listed on a separate page as bcc's. When drafting letters for the Governor's signature, please attach to your e-mail message a document containing recipient's title and organization, as well as envelope information, so that we may easily distribute cc's and bcc's.

Form letters with multiple addressees

Use mail merge format for any letters to be sent to three or more addressees. Electronically forward to Constituent Services the following attachments: template, database, and merged letters, as described below. Please follow guidelines for letter format, address/salutation format and correspondence preferences as described in these Guidelines.

- Template: The actual letter to be merged, including properly placed data fields. HINT: Use the template, not the database, for information that does not vary. (For example, if all the letters have a Washington State address, show "WA" in the template. The same is true if all of the recipients are addressed as "The Honorable.")
- Database: At minimum, the following separate fields should be included: Firstname, Lastname, Title, Address1, Address2, City, State (if letters will be sent to different states), and Zipcode. (Note -- if the field name contains more than one word, do not insert a space between words.)

When inputting data, be careful not to inadvertently insert spaces after the entry. This will show up as a double space in the merged letters.

- Merged Documents: Proof read your merged documents for typographical and spacing errors before forwarding them to the Governor's office.

Closing out a Referral

After you have concluded your handling of a constituent referral, you need to "close the loop" so that Constituent Services can close out and file the log.

If a letter was sent directly to the constituent from someone in your agency, send to Constituent Services:

- A electronic copy of the referral sheet
- An electronic copy in WORD or a pdf version of the response letter attached to an email (preferred).

If an email was sent directly to the constituent from someone in your agency, send an electronic copy of the email response, along with a copy of the referral sheet to Constituent Services. This copy should be sent as a blind cc, or as a copy of the original response sent. Please do not add the constituent services staff person as a cc to your original response to the constituent.

If a letter was drafted for the Governor's signature, send the following via e-mail (the subject line should read, "Governor's Correspondence, Log#----- --" or "Governor's Correspondence, Agency-Initiated): "

- The proposed response letter, saved as a Word attachment. (*A signed paper copy of the final letter will be returned to your agency.*)
- Electronic versions of enclosures, if applicable, in Word.
- If a letter has multiple addresses, cc's, or bcc's, please attach a Word document in merge format containing the data needed to print letters and envelopes.
- An electronic copy of the original letter either in pdf or word format.

If we requested draft language, send:

- The referral sheet, if applicable
- The draft language via e-mail in Word format, so we can easily incorporate it into the Governor's response

If a response was made by telephone:

Record the date and time the call was made, as well as, a summary of the conversation. If the issue required follow-up, be sure to record the date and time of each contact. Deliver this information to Constituent Services, via email, to the person who made the referral to your agency.

Executive Correspondence

Executive Correspondence is defined as mail, faxes, e-mails, hotlines, etc. received from:

- Elected officials (the President, members of Congress, statewide officials, state legislators from Washington or other states, other governors, elected officials from cities or counties in Washington) including most former elected officials
- State or federal cabinet members
- Governors' associations
- Officials and dignitaries from foreign countries
- Significant state or national organizations (i.e., labor unions, business organizations, social services representatives, environmental groups, etc.)
- Recognized national, state or community leaders
- Tribal members
- The Governor's family or personal friends
- Others as deemed appropriate

All correspondence not defined as "executive" is considered to be **General Correspondence**.

The Executive Correspondence Analyst will send all priority correspondence referrals to agencies via e-mail, including a pdf copy of the constituent correspondence and referral sheet.

If you have questions about the status of an executive letter, please contact the Executive Correspondence Analyst. Please have the log number ready when inquiring about a referral.

Correspondence Referred to Agencies

When an agency drafts a response for the Governor's signature, the employee who is responsible for Governor's correspondence should send it via e-mail as a Word attachment to the Executive Correspondence Analyst. The appropriate Executive Policy Advisor will be asked to review the draft. The subject line should read: "Governor's Correspondence, Log# ----." The Executive Correspondence Analyst will track the letter through the approval process.

After the Governor signs a document, it is returned to the Executive Correspondence Analyst, who will mail it out and close the log. A copy of the signed response is then returned to the Governor's contact person at the corresponding agency.

On the rare occasion when a log referred by the Governor's Office is labeled "RUSH," please work closely with the Executive Correspondence Analyst to expedite the response.

Agency-Initiated Correspondence (Requested by a State Agency)

If a letter originates within a state agency, it should be sent --- via e-mail as a Word attachment --- to the Executive Correspondence Analyst. The subject line should read: "Governor's Correspondence, Agency-Initiated." Attach background information and a brief memo from the agency's director to the Governor's Chief of Staff explaining the need for the requested letter. The Executive Correspondence Analyst will enter the agency-initiated letter into CRT, assign it a log number, assign it to the appropriate Executive Policy Advisor, and track the letter through the approval process.

The Governor's Office requires at least two weeks to turn around agency-initiated letters and documents for the Governor's signature. In the event that a letter is needed sooner, label it "RUSH" and include an explanation for the letter's RUSH nature in the memo to the Chief of Staff. Please set clear deadlines for completion in your memo and work with the Executive Correspondence Analyst to ensure that your deadlines are met.

Review Process

Correspondence for the Governor's signature is edited and reviewed for content by Executive Policy staff, the Correspondence Writer, the Constituent Services Manager, the Chief of Staff, the Assistant to the Governor and, as needed, other senior management staff. If questions arise during this process, we will call for additional clarification or information.

We strongly encourage a review process within each agency for all letters for the Governor's signature, within the parameters of the one-week response deadline. Letters to constituents reflect not only upon the Governor, but upon all of state government, so please be mindful of appropriate tone, grammar, word choice, sentence structure, clarity, implications of content, punctuation, spelling, etc.

Constituent Services Letter Format

Letters should be signature ready.

Page setup:

First page top margin: 2.25 inches

Bottom, Left, Right margins: 1 inch

Font: Times New Roman/CG Times, size 12

Single space

August 29, 2000 **4 Returns**

¶

¶

¶

The Honorable John Doe (*Use “The Honorable” for elected officials*)

U. S. House of Representatives

1234 Wisdom Street

Anytown, D.C. 99546 (*Zip code is two spaces after the state*)

Dear Congressman Doe: (*United States Representative should be addressed as Congressman/Congresswoman*) **2 Returns**

¶

Thank you for contacting my office. I appreciate hearing from you. **2 Returns**

¶

Views and comments such as yours frequently give my staff and me valuable insights into the important issues facing people in communities throughout our state. We rely on the calls and letters we receive to help us determine what is working and what isn't, and where we need to concentrate our efforts. **2 Returns**

¶

Again, thank you for contacting me about this matter. We will certainly consider your message, and look forward to hearing from you if you have further questions or comments. **2 Returns**

¶

Sincerely, **4 Returns**

¶

¶

¶

Christine O. Gregoire (*Do not type the Governor's name in all caps!*)

Governor **2 returns** (*Letters should not contain the initials of the author or the person who typed it*)

¶

Enclosures (2) (*Enclosure is used for letters; Attachment is used for memos*) **2 returns**

¶

cc: Jane Doe, President, DOE Enterprises (*“cc” should not be capitalized and should follow the enclosure notation*)

Additional page top margin: 1 inch

The Honorable John Doe

August 29, 2000 (Make sure date is before the page number)

Page 2 (Page number should be in numeric format) 2 returns¶

¶

Views and comments such as yours frequently give my staff and me valuable insights into the important issues facing people in communities throughout our state. We rely on the calls and letters we receive to help us determine what is working and what isn't, and where we need to concentrate our efforts. 2 Returns¶

¶

Again, thank you for contacting me about this matter. We will certainly consider your message, and look forward to hearing from you if you have further questions or comments. 2 Returns¶

¶

Sincerely, 4 Returns¶

¶

¶

¶

Christine O. Gregoire (Do not type the Governor's name in all caps!)

Governor 2 returns¶ (Letters should not contain the initials of the author or the person who typed it)

¶

Enclosures (2) (Enclosure is used for letters; Attachment is used for memos) 2 returns¶

¶

cc: Jane Doe, President, DOE Enterprises ("cc" should not be capitalized and should follow the enclosure notation)

For any other questions, please refer to The Gregg Reference Manual.

Constituent Services Memo Format

Memos should be signature ready.

Page setup:

First page top margin: 2.25 inches

Bottom, Left, Right margins: 1 inch

Font: Times New Roman/CG Times, size 12

Single space

August 29, 2000 **4 Returns**

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TO: State Agency Directors **2 Returns**

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FROM: Christine O. Gregoire, Governor **2 Returns**

¶

SUBJECT: 2000 Washington State Employee Appreciation **3 Returns**

¶

¶

Thank you for contacting my office. I appreciate hearing from you. **2 Returns**

¶

Views and comments such as yours frequently give my staff and me valuable insights into the important issues facing people in communities throughout our state. We rely on the calls and letters we receive to help us determine what is working and what isn't, and where we need to concentrate our efforts. **2 Returns**

¶

Again, thank you for contacting me about this matter. We will certainly consider your message, and look forward to hearing from you if you have further questions or comments. **4 Returns**

¶

¶

¶ Attachments (3) **2 Returns**

¶

cc: Jane Doe (*"cc" should not be capitalized and should follow the enclosure notation*)

Address/Salutation Formats

Do not abbreviate a person's title – use Chief Executive Officer instead of CEO; Corporal Jack Jones, not CPL Jack Jones, etc.

City

The Honorable John Doe
Mayor of Olympia
123 Plum Street
Olympia, WA 98504

Dear Mayor Doe:

The Honorable Mary Doe
Olympia City Council
123 Plum Street
Olympia, WA 98504

Dear Councilman/woman Doe:

County

The Honorable John Doe
Thurston County Commissioner
123 Plum Street
Olympia, WA 98504

Dear Commissioner Doe:

The Honorable John Doe
King County Executive
123 Plum Street
Seattle, WA 98504

Dear Executive Doe:

State

The Honorable Suzie Smith
House of Representatives
311 John L. O'Brien Building
Olympia, WA 98054

Dear Representative Smith:

The Honorable John Doe
State Senate
412 John A. Cherberg Building
Olympia, WA 98504

Dear Senator Doe:

Federal

The Honorable Patty Murray
United States Senate
111 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510-4704

Dear Senator Murray:

The Honorable John Doe
U. S. House of Representatives
1317 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515-4703

Dear Congressman/woman:

Tribal

The Honorable John Doe
Quinault Nation
1234 Old Highway
Olympia, WA 98504

Dear Chairman/woman:

Correspondence Preferences

- The purpose of a letter should always be stated in the first paragraph.
- Double check spelling of names and addresses.
- Post office addresses should either be spelled out or should include periods after the P and the O, example:

Post Office Box 40600

P.O. Box 40600

Street addresses should be spelled out, example:

416 14th Avenue SW

222 West Boulevard

- Use No. instead of the symbol # to designate a number in an address.

No. 513-B

#513-B

- If an address contains a string of numbers, put a dash between them:

12345 – 7th Avenue

- To show original letters going to all recipients, use the following format:

Sincerely,

Christine O. Gregoire

Governor **2 returns**

¶

Originals also sent to:

U.S. Senator Tim Green

Congressman Greg Allan **2 returns**

¶

cc: U.S. Senator Jeffrey Brown

- Courtesy copy notations should contain two lowercase c's followed by a colon, tab, name, title, and agency (title isn't always necessary, but the rest are). The Word processing programs may auto-correct this to make the first letter a capital, but in this case, use lowercase letters. An example of a correct notation is:

cc: Tom Fitzsimmons, Chief of Staff, Office of the Governor

- The following is the order in which courtesy copies should be listed. Ranking order of cc's:

U.S. Senators & Representatives
 Governors
 State Senators
 State Representatives
 Other elected officials
 Agency directors (secretaries or commissioners)
 Private citizens
 Governor's Staff

In an address, always use two spaces between the state and the zip code. Do not spell out the state, but, rather, use the accepted postal service abbreviation. Space twice before the zip code. Word processing programs may advise using only one space, but use two, example:

Olympia, WA 98504

- Keep letters to one page if at all possible. Normally, the Governor prefers Times New Roman 12 font, side and bottom margins of 1 inch, and a top margin of 2.25 inches. However, you can revert to 11.5 font, side margins of .75, a top margin of 2, and a bottom margin of .5 in order to fit a letter on one page.
- Certain openings and closings to a letter are preferred.

Examples of preferred openings include:

Thank you for your recent letter regarding...

I am writing to respectfully request your consideration of...

I am writing to express my support for Washington State's application for...

Examples of preferred closings include:

Again, thank you for contacting me about...

Thank you for your consideration.

- Affect vs. Effect

Mr. Smith has monitored the **effects** of pesticides upon groundwater for 25 years, and his work continues to positively **affect** his community.

- Assure vs. Ensure

I **assure** you that my staff and I will do whatever is reasonable to **ensure** the safety of our schools.

- Plurals/Agreement

Your dedication to children, families, and your community **is** greatly appreciated.
Your energy and dedication to your community **are** greatly appreciated.

- Capitalization

Refrain from over-capitalization, especially in instances such as, "This Program has proved to be extremely valuable." In that sentence, "program" should not be capitalized.

In addition, as a rule, the governor prefers the following capitalization:
"Washington State" and "state of Washington."

- Redundancies

Do not repeat the same word or phrase several times in the same sentence, paragraph, or letter.

- Passive/Weak Voice

PASSIVE: Tomorrow, I will be announcing a revolutionary new program.
PREFERRED: Tomorrow, I will announce a revolutionary new program.

PASSIVE: I am hoping to visit Spokane next week.
PREFERRED: I hope to visit Spokane next week.

WEAK: I wanted to tell you that our meeting has been canceled.
PREFERRED: I regret to inform you that our meeting has been canceled. **OR**
Our meeting has been canceled

WEAK: I want to take this opportunity to thank you for your many valuable contributions.
PREFERRED: I am pleased to have this opportunity to thank you for your many valuable contributions. **OR** Thank you for your many valuable contributions.

- "In care of" notations should contain a lowercase c, slash, and lowercase o. The Word processing programs will incorrectly auto-capitalize the c, so remember to double check for accuracy. An example of a correct notation is:

Professor James Smith
c/o Mr. Henry Jones

- Double check subject-verb agreement.

- The phrases "I feel" and "I think" should be avoided. "I believe" and "I am confident" are preferred.

- A member of the U.S. House of Representatives should be addressed as "Congressman" or "Congresswoman." The title "Representative" is used for members of the state House of Representatives.
- Envelopes should be printed in the same font as letters - Times New Roman 12 - directly on the envelopes.
- In general, numbers below 10 should be spelled out. Exceptions include dates, dollar figures, and percentages.
- The word "percent" should be spelled out.
- Watch out for the collective "we." Letters should sound as if the governor wrote them herself. In general, "I" is preferred. Also, "I understand" should be used when an agency has provided the governor with certain information or statistics.
- Use "The Honorable" as a title for current and former local, state, and federal elected officials and presidential cabinet members. Exceptions include port commissioners, sheriffs, police and fire chiefs, prosecutors, public utility district officials, and local school board members.
- Envelopes and inside addresses should conform to a certain format:

INCORRECT:

Tom Fitzsimmons
Chief of Staff, Office of the Governor
P.O. Box 40002
Olympia, WA 98504

CORRECT:

Tom Fitzsimmons
Chief of Staff
Office of the Governor
P.O. Box 40002
Olympia, WA 98504

OR

Tom Fitzsimmons, Chief of Staff
Office of the Governor
P.O. Box 40002
Olympia, WA 98504